

THE USE OF A STEEL COMB FOR DISSECTION IN THE AXILLA.

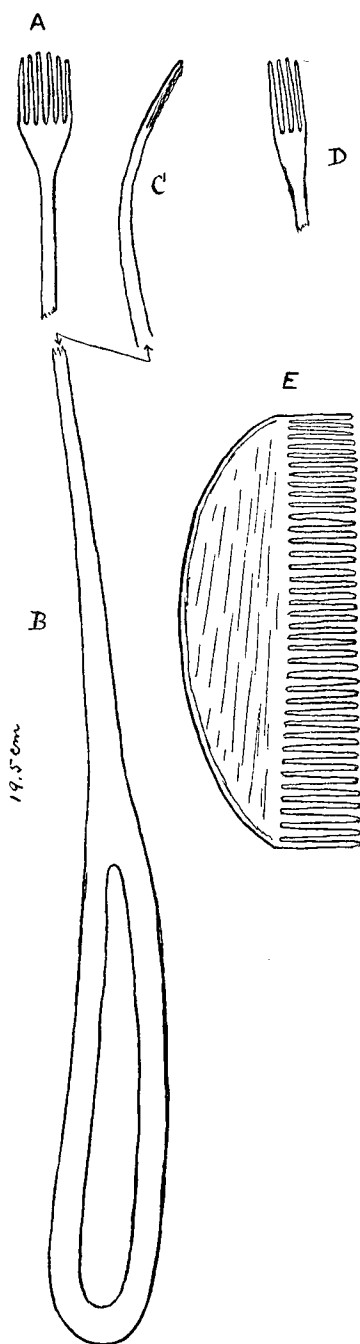
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I HAVE used for three years past a little instrument, figured on adjoining page, in cases of breast cancer in making the axillary and subclavicular dissection. The process of dissection of these regions with forceps and knife is both slow and unsatisfactory, and unless a great deal of time is given, it is more or less imperfect. Moreover, there are deep tissues which are not reached at all with the knife. I have found that with a pair of forceps and the little metal comb (See Fig. A, B) I could very rapidly draw the fat out from the depths away from nerves and great vessels. The little instrument has also proved to be of great value in skeletonizing the vascular trunks, near their points of origin from the larger trunks, for the purpose of ligation. When cleaned in this way the nerves and vessels are at once readily differentiated.

The character of the dissection thus made in the peripheral parts of the field is, I believe, more perfect and less liable to distribute any cancerous elements than that made with the knife.

The length of the comb is 19.5 cm. The end is made of little steel prongs about 1 cm. long, terminating in a fine rounded point as shown at A. The instrument is curved at its end as seen at C. If B were joined on to C, the instrument would then be shown as it appears in outline. I sometimes use a smaller prong (D) for finer work. I have tried to dissect the peripheral parts of the breast in its lower portion with a larger, coarser instrument, like that shown in E, but as it has not yet proved satisfactory, I simply mention the experiment.



Steel comb used for dissection in the axilla. (See p. —.)